

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR PINT CSCE SHUM UR US
SUBJECT: MUKACHEVO CEMETERY; MOSCOW CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS
LEADERS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 1897, (B) MOSCOW 1571

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1. BEGIN SUMMARY. EMBOFF REVIEWED ON FEB 16 THE MUKACHEVO
CEMETERY DELEGATION VISIT TO MOSCOW AND THE UKRAINE
WITH L.V. SHCHERBAKOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS' FOREIGN SECTION. LATTER WAS PLEASED
WITH RESULTS OF VISIT AND URGED ATTENDANCE OF RABBI
SCHNEIER AT FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN MOSCOW
IN JUNE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEB 16, EMBOFF REVIEWED OVER LUNCH THE MUKACHEVO
CEMETERY DELEGATION VISIT TO MOSCOW AND THE UKRAINE
WITH L.V. SHCHERBAKOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN SECTION
OF THE COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS. ACCORDING TO
SHCHERBAKOV, RABBI SCHNEIER AND HIS GROUP HAD ENCOUNTERED
V.N. TITOV, THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE COUNCIL, IN BUDAPEST,
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WHERE GROUP STOPPED EN ROUTE HOME FROM MUKACHEVO.
SHCHERBAKOV'S VERSION OF WHAT SCHNEIER TOLD TITOV ABOUT
GROUP'S EXPERIENCES IN KIEV AND MUKACHEVO GENERALLY
COINCIDED WITH WHAT WE HEARD FROM SCHNEIER EARLIER (REF A):
THAT GROUP WAS WELL RECEIVED AFTER INITIAL CONFUSION
AND HAD DISCUSSED STATUS OF CEMETERY WITH OFFICIALS IN
KIEV AND MUKACHEVO. HE EXPLAINED AWAY INITIAL PROBLEMS

IN KIEV AS CAUSED BY FACT THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE SLUGGISH IN RESPONDING TO MOSCOW'S GUIDANCE, AND THAT COUNCIL HAD QUICKLY STRAIGHTENED THEM OUT. ACCORDING TO SHCHERBAKOV, THE MUKACHEVO CITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ISPOLKOM) HAS FORMED A "SPECIAL COMMISSION" TO EXAMINE GROUP'S PROPOSAL TO PRESERVE CEMETERY AND WILL PRESENT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ISPOLKOM. IN THE MEANTIME, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN STATUS OF CEMETERY. SHCHERBAKOV REPEATED STATEMENT HE MADE EARLIER TO SCHNEIER THAT ALTHOUGH LOCAL OFFICIALS HAD DIRECT, LEGAL COMPETENCE OVER CEMETERY, THEY WERE, OF COURSE, RESPONSIVE TO MOSCOW'S GUIDANCE; HE REPRESENTED COUNCIL AS WORKING TO HELP MUKACHEVO GROUP.

3. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, EMBOFF EXPLAINED TO SHCHERBAKOV THE GRADUAL SHIFT IN THE AIM OF THE MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION FROM ITS INITIAL EFFORT TO EXHUME TO ITS CURRENT GOAL OF PRESERVING CEMETERY (REF B). LATTER LISTENED WITH ATTENTION AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR CLARIFICATION OF QUESTION WHICH, HE SAID, HAD CAUSED CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION IN MFA AND THE COUNCIL. HE WAS ALSO GLAD TO RECEIVE FROM EMBOFF COPIES OF CABLES SENT BY SENATORS KENNEDY AND RIBICOFF IN SUPPORT OF THE GOAL OF PRESERVING CEMETERY WHICH, HE AVERRED, WOULD BE USEFUL TO THE COUNCIL IN JUSTIFYING THE MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION PROPOSAL.

4. SHCHERBAKOV PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING DETAILS WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN EARLY JUNE: CONFERENCE IS BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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HELD AT INITIATIVE OF THE PATRIARCH, WITH METROPOLITAN YUVENALIY ACTING AS HOST. OVER FIVE HUNDRED DELEGATES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD REPRESENTING THE MAJOR FAITHS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND, INCLUDING GROUPS FROM THE U.S. CONFERENCE WILL DISCUSS ROLE OF CHURCHES IN SUPPORTING PEACE AND DISARMAMENT. SHCHERBAKOV HASTENED TO ADD THAT NO STATE OR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO CRITICISM AND THAT AMERICANS NEED NOT HAVE THIS CONCERN IN WEIGHING DECISION TO COME. HE STRONGLY URGED ATTENDANCE BY APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION AND, SPECIFICALLY, RABBI SCHNEIER, "AS DELEGATE, OBSERVER, OR GUEST." THE CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN JUNE 5 AND WOULD BE PRECEDED BY A PREPARATORY MEETING IN MARCH.

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5. COMMENT. SOPHISTICATED AND APPARENTLY REASONABLE, SHCHERBAKOV

IS ADEPT AT SMOOTH DISCUSSION OF SENSITIVE TOPICS WITHOUT BECOMING GENUINELY CANDID. IN ANY CASE, HE PORTRAYS COUNCIL AS ALWAYS READY TO HELP IN ANY LEGITIMATE MATTER WHERE IT HAS COMPETENCE, AND HAS HIMSELF BEEN HELPFUL RE MUKACHEVO.

6. DURING SMALL TALK (EMBOFF HAD MET SHCHERBAKOV WHEN LATTER WAS STATIONED WITH SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO HIS CURRENT ASSIGNMENT WITH THE COUNCIL), SHCHERBAKOV LAMENTED THE DEARTH OF GOOD POPULAR (I.E., AMERICAN) MUSIC ON MOSCOW RADIO AND TELEVISION. HE SAID HIS RADIO AT HOME WAS "PERMANETLY TUNED" TO VOA WAVELENGTH AND THAT HIS CHILDREN OFTEN TAPED THE JAZZ PROGRAM AND WOULD NOT THINK OF LISTENING TO ANY OTHER STATION. SHCHERBAKOV ADDED THAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BROADCASTS AND NOT THE RUSSIAN ONES, WHICH WERE "TOO TENDENTIOUS." HIS ENGLISH IS EXCELLENT.
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